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THE HOUR AND THE DUTY

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THE HOUR AND THE DUTY

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

HON. J. C. PRITCHARD

OF ASHEVILLE, N. C.

AT A PATRIOTIC MEETING OF CITIZENS
OF WAKE COUNTY, HELD AT RALEIGH,
N. C., SEPTEMBER 3, 1917

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ADDRESS
BY
HON. J. C. PRITCHARD.

Mr. POUL. Mr. Speaker, under the leave granted to me to extend my remarks in the RECORD, I include a speech delivered by Ex-Senator Pritchard upon the question of patriotism and the duty of the American citizen in this hour.

The speech is as follows:

THE HOUR AND THE DUTY.

I esteem it an honor to have the privilege of addressing this representative audience composed of the citizens of Wake County. It is peculiarly fitting that these exercises should be held on Labor Day and under the joint auspices of the Wake County Council of Defense and the labor organizations of the city. We are here to do honor to the 304 selected men who have enlisted for service in the most gigantic military struggle the world has ever witnessed. In this connection I deem it appropriate to say that the laboring men of the Nation have always been true and loyal to our Government, and have borne its burdens on many bloody battle fields where the Stars and Stripes have triumphed and our heroes have won imperishable fame. Labor and capital appreciate now perhaps more than ever before the importance of living under a Government strong enough to protect human life and property rights in any emergency that may arise. I can not resist the temptation to discuss briefly the relation the citizen sustains to our Government, and the importance of such relation to the general welfare of the American people.

We can not ignore the fact that during the past few years there have been many evidences of unrest and an inclination on the part of many to oppose what may be properly termed "duly constituted authority." This in the main is due to a failure on the part of parents to give their children proper training at a time when their minds are in a formative state and when they may be easily taught the importance of becoming useful and patriotic citizens.

Under a republican form of government like ours those who maintain and support it are recruited from the home. Therefore the maintenance and perpetuation of our Government and its institutions depend largely upon the character of the home. Many of our parents fail to appreciate the responsibility that rests upon them as respects this vital question. "A stream can rise no higher than its source" and a government no higher than the plane of its citizenship. Therefore it is important that a parent should exercise the greatest care in training his boy for the performance of the duties that must necessarily in the near future devolve upon him as a citizen of this country. The parent who enjoys all the rights, privileges, and immunities of the Constitution and the laws passed in pursuance thereof for his well-being and protection owes to his country the duty of rear-

ing his sons so that they may grow up to be useful, God-fearing, and patriotic citizens. The disposition to violate the law grows out of an improper regard for the constituted authorities of the State and the Nation.

We are now engaged in a conflict which from the very nature of things must eventually affect the welfare of every civilized nation of the world. It should be constantly borne in mind that this is not a war of our choosing, and that it was with deep regret that we were finally impelled to take the step which imposed upon us as a Nation the obligation to aid in the rescue of those who are being destroyed by the most brutal and inhuman methods ever resorted to by any race of men from the dawn of creation until this good hour.

Many reasons have been assigned in support of the action of Congress and the President. Some say that it is our purpose to make democracy safe for the world, others that it is to wipe out Prussianism and militarism, and still others that it is to avenge the wrongs committed against Belgium by the Imperial German Government. All must admit that the President displayed great patience and forbearance before final action was taken. He employed all legitimate means within his power in an honest effort to keep the American people out of this awful conflict. Indeed, there were many well-meaning people in both political parties who criticized the President for not taking definite action sooner than he did.

Now that we are face to face with the stern realities of war and the direful consequences that must come to those involved, we can all the more appreciate the feelings which actuated the President in endeavoring to avoid, if possible, the necessity of calling upon the young manhood of America to take up arms in defense of what all fair-minded people must admit is a just cause. While it is true that there was strong opposition in the ranks of both political parties to a declaration of war, after Congress acted the President had, and now has, the unanimous support of every patriotic American, regardless of his political or religious views. Therefore, in so far as this war is concerned, we are neither Democrats nor Republicans, but American citizens. This is the spirit which flashed from the lips of Patrick Henry in the Continental Congress, when he said, "I am not a Virginian, but an American."

This is not the war of any individual, but it is a war in which every American who has red blood in his veins and who honestly desires to safeguard his own Government should be interested, and he should be willing to support it with the same zeal and courage which actuated Washington and other Revolutionary heroes when the foundations of our Government were being made secure. An overwhelming majority of the representatives of both political parties in Congress are to-day standing like a stone wall behind the Government, doing everything in their power to secure the enactment of any legislation that may be necessary for the successful conduct of the war.

It is with pride that we point to the fact that the American people have never failed to support their Government in the past, and those who attempt in this trying hour, by any means whatsoever, to embarrass the Government in its efforts to bring this war to a successful termination, should, if their conduct warrants it, be indicated, and if convicted their punishment should be

such as to warn all slackers that their presence is a menace to the welfare of this country. It is high time that this issue should be so clearly drawn that no one, however indifferent he may be, could possibly misunderstand the attitude of our Government. As our distinguished governor recently said in a speech delivered at Asheville, there was a time when the question as to the propriety of declaring war against Germany was debatable one, but that day is past, and further discussion of the question is extremely harmful and should not be tolerated.

The whole world is overshadowed with gloom, and our own land is saddened in consequence of the fact that our brave boys are called upon to engage in this terrible conflict for the purpose of protecting American rights and rendering aid to suffering humanity. Notwithstanding this condition, there are some who are doing all in their power to embarrass the President in his efforts to bring the war to a successful termination.

The only way to successfully meet those who are disloyal is to instill in the minds of the people lessons of patriotism and devotion to America and her institutions. Let us, therefore, cultivate a spirit of patriotism and respect for the majesty of the Constitution and the laws passed in pursuance thereof.

The disposition in certain quarters to denounce the courts and criticise those who are charged with the administration of the law has a tendency to weaken the faith of the people in the stability of our Government. Notwithstanding the critical condition of the affairs of the Nation at this time, some have dared even to go so far as to unjustly criticise the President, and in the past this same class of people have impugned the motives of the Supreme Court—the highest court in the land—the last resort of the people.

This sentiment has been nurtured and developed by the demagogue who is willing to assail the very foundation of the Government in order that he may succeed in his political aspirations. The courts are not above legitimate criticism, and when a judge acts improperly he should be criticised, and if his conduct warrants it, he should be impeached, but there should be no wholesale denunciation of the courts, and those who attempt by such methods to bring discredit upon any branch of the Government should be taught by the American people that the doctrines which they teach can never flourish on American soil.

The late ex-President Cleveland, in an address delivered at Princeton, September 19, 1901, in referring to the death of the lamented McKinley, said:

There is a serious lesson for us all in the tragedy of our late President's death. The shock of it is so great that it is hard at this time to read the lesson calmly. We can hardly fail to see, however, behind the bloody deed of the assassin, the horrible faces and figures from which it will not do to turn away. If we are to escape further attack upon our peace and security we must boldly and resolutely grapple with the monster of anarchy. It is a thing that we can not safely leave to be dealt with by party or partisanship. Nothing can guarantee us against its menace except the teaching and practice of the best citizenship; the exposure of the ends and aims of the gospel of discontent and hatred of social order and the brave enactment and execution of repressive laws.

These are words of wisdom, spoken by one of the greatest statesmen of his age, and the lesson which he sought to teach should be constantly borne in mind by every patriotic citizen. This is, indeed, a land of liberty, but it is not a land of license,

and the sooner the lawless classes understand the true situation the better it will be for all parties concerned. The individual who believes in dynamite rather than reason and who is willing to resort to unlawful methods to further his ends, and is not willing to support his Government under any and all circumstances, should find no welcome in this free land of ours. The enemies of this country and the demagogue have much in common, and the one is as dangerous as the other, and each should be spurned by the American people.

I do not wish to be understood as intimating that an appreciable number of North Carolinians are unfaithful to the Government at this time. I believe that North Carolina in this struggle will do her full duty, and after the final muster roll is made up we will find that we have sent as many soldiers to the front in proportion to our population as any State in the Union.

Now that we have entered the war, the sole and only question to be considered is as to the best possible methods to be employed in order that we may bring success to America and her allies.

I do not deem it necessary to enter into a discussion of the merits of any controversy that may have existed anterior to the declaration of war further than to say that I consider any one of the following reasons sufficient ground upon which to base our action: (a) Our duty to uphold the neutrality of Belgium under a treaty to which we are a party; (b) to resent the unwarranted interference with our rights as a Nation upon the high seas; (c) to take active and effective steps to suppress what may be properly termed the most brutal and uncivilized slaughter of human beings that has ever been known in the history of the world; (d) to secure at the end of the hostilities, by the concerted action of all the nations of the world, a permanent peace by the creation of a board of arbitration to which all matters in controversy in the future between nations may be submitted and amicably adjusted without the destruction of property or the loss of human life.

We can maintain either one of these grounds without violating the principles of Christianity. This is the spirit which prompts the Nation to call her splendid young manhood to arms in order that we may demonstrate to the world that our Government is founded upon the principles of justice and righteousness, which are as permanent as the rock of Gibraltar.

Long anterior to the declaration of war against Germany, and at a time when we were observing strict neutrality as a Nation, a warning was issued purporting to come from a representative of the Imperial German Government and published in the leading newspapers of this country in which it was boldly stated that if any Americans should attempt to cross the Atlantic upon the *Lusitania* they would do so at their own peril. That this warning emanated from the German Government is clearly established by the fact that the *Lusitania*, with all of her human freight, consisting in part of men, women, and little children, who were born on American soil, and therefore entitled to the fullest protection of this Government, was, without warning to such citizens or giving them an opportunity to escape, sent to the bottom of the ocean by a German submarine. The sinking of that ill-fated vessel in defiance of every principle of international law and the rules of civilized warfare was sufficient

within itself to justify the American Government in declaring war against Germany.

When we contemplate the destruction of human life and property by Germany and her allies in France, and the consequent privation and suffering of her people at this time, we are forcefully reminded of the timely and effective service France rendered this country when our existence as a nation was trembling in the balance. Under these circumstances anyone with a spark of gratitude in his soul must admit that it is our bounden duty to go to the rescue of the descendants of Lafayette and Rochambeau and the other gallant sons of France who left their native land and joined with the American forces in our struggle to become a free and independent people. If no other reason existed, this alone would amply justify us in sending all the men and money necessary to drive the invader from French soil and restore to the people of that unhappy land the territory which has been so unjustly taken from them by methods heretofore unknown in warfare among civilized people.

In condemning the Kaiser and his associates I do not wish to be understood as impugning in the slightest degree the loyalty and patriotism of the Germans who are residents of this country, feeling as I do that with few exceptions they are just as loyal to this country as those of us who are native born.

It is not our purpose in entering this contest to demand indemnity or to acquire a foot of territory by conquest. Such has always been our policy. The great domain which we possess came to us not through bloody conquest nor by the violation of the rights of another nation. The policy of this country in its war against Spain is the most conspicuous example of the generous treatment of one nation by another, under similar circumstances, in the history of the world.

We not only purchased and paid for the Philippine Islands, but gave them schools, churches, modern methods of sanitation, and, indeed, everything necessary to encourage the moral and intellectual development of the people of those islands, and now after the lapse of a comparatively short time they are as free as the people of the United States. The same policy was adopted as respects Cuba and Porto Rico, with the result that the people of each of those countries are living together in peace and happiness and making rapid development in everything that tends toward a higher civilization, and it is in harmony with this well-established policy that we extend a helping hand to our allies across the sea.

The conduct of Germany threatens not only the existence of good government in Europe but, if by any chance they should win, it will in the near future result in the overthrow of representative government on every part of the globe, including the Government under which we live. It has been well said that "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." May I not paraphrase this statement by saying that eternal vigilance on our part is necessary to insure the continued safety of our own Government? With this end in view we should at all times in the future maintain a trained force sufficient to command the respect of the other nations of the earth and as a guaranty that no nation will ever have the audacity to even attempt to violate the rights of the American people.

The cruel and heartless treatment of those who have been so unfortunate as to fall into the hands of the German soldiers clearly indicates the spirit which actuates them in the war which they are waging for the purpose of dominating the people of every nation on the face of the earth. Existing conditions are such as to arouse the spirit of intense patriotism in the breast of every citizen of this country, and this should not abate until we wipe from every inch of soil now occupied by the Germans the last vestige of military oppression. It has always been the policy of America to do everything in her power to aid the oppressed of other lands, and by so doing we have not only gained prestige abroad but have greatly strengthened our own Government.

If as a result of this conflict a republican form of government for the people of Germany should be established, it would be hailed with delight by everyone who has the slightest interest in the progress and development of the human race; but, as I understand, it was not our purpose in entering this conflict to force the people of that country to adopt any particular form of government, our real purpose being, as the President has so ably said—

To deliver the free people of the world from the menace and actual power of a vast military establishment controlled by an irresponsible Government, which, having secretly planned to dominate the world, proceeded to carry the plan out without regard either to the sacred obligations of treaty or the long-established practices and long-cherished principles of international action and honor: which chose its own time for the war; delivered its blow fiercely and suddenly; stopped at no barrier either of law or mercy; swept a whole continent within the tide of blood—not the blood of soldiers only but the blood of innocent women and children and of the helpless poor.

Many people have an exaggerated idea as to the number of killed and wounded in this war. In this connection I will say that my distinguished friend, Hon. James H. Pou, of this city, has rendered the State and the Nation a splendid service by showing that the percentage is not near so great as we have been led to believe by the reports that have been sent out indiscriminately through the press. Indeed, some people seem to take peculiar pleasure in circulating reports calculated to discourage the American soldiers and our people generally.

Now, a word as to those who will be permitted to stay at home and pursue their daily vocations, which involves an overwhelming majority of our people. While those of us who fall within the exempted class are to enjoy this privilege, there are many things that we can do to aid our Government in the Herculean task that it has undertaken. We should at all times act in harmony with the policy of our President as respects the conservation of foodstuffs and other things essential to the support of the Government and the forces in the field.

The generous conduct of our good women in the preparation of articles necessary to the comfort of the sick and wounded challenges the admiration of everyone who loves his country. The Red Cross is doing most effective work in sending those things that are essential to the welfare and comfort of those who may be sick and wounded on foreign soil, and, best of all, they are sending angels of mercy in the person of nurses who go as our representatives to minister to the wants of our brave boys. This should appeal directly to the heart of every human

being who possesses that generous instinct that has always characterized the American people in the face of every great calamity.

Our hearts are filled with sadness when we realize that our dear boys will soon be called upon to fight on foreign soil, but I confidently believe that we will receive good reports from them; that they will make a record as soldiers that will challenge the admiration of the world. I trust that our young men will not forget that the most important thing in life is to maintain a good character under any and all circumstances, and I confidently believe that the conduct of our boys while abroad will be such as to develop those traits essential to true manhood.

The American soldier has never turned his back to any foe, and I verily believe that the indomitable courage and will power which has always characterized our boys will soon bring this war to a speedy termination. When the descendants of those who fought with Grant, Sheridan, Lee, Jackson, Wheeler, and Shafter touch elbows, inspired by the strains of Yankee Doodle and Dixie, with anything like a fair opportunity to show what the American soldier can do, the Kaiser and those who are really in sympathy with him will rue the day they conceived the plan of dominating the world by brute force.

After the awful struggle is over and our boys are permitted to return to their native land we want them to know that their services will be recognized by the American people and that they will be largely instrumental in shaping the future destiny of this country.

The American flag and the many things that it stands for should be their constant thought. Let them cherish this glorious emblem of our liberty, to which Dr. Edward Everett Hale has so beautifully referred in the following language:

And for your country, boy, and for that flag, never dream but of serving her as she bids you. No matter what happens to you, no matter who flatters you or abuses you, never look at another flag. Remember, that behind all these men you have to do with, behind officers, and Government, and people even, there is the country herself, your country, and that you belong to her as you do belong to your own mother. Stand by her as you would stand by your own mother.

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